

Veterans Care Center Advisory Committee  
Meeting Minutes  
March 30, 2007

**DRAFT**

A meeting of the Veterans Care Center Advisory Committee (VCCAC) was held on Friday, March 30, 2007 at the American Legion Department of Virginia Building, 1708 Commonwealth Avenue in Richmond.

**Members Present:**

Vince Burgess, ex-officio/voting	John Jackson
Julia Dillon	Bill Van Thiel, ex-officio/voting
Jim Dudley	

**Members Absent:**

Scott Brown	Worth Kenyon
Thad Jones	Karen Olichwier

**Others Present:**

Bert Boyd, DVS Chief Operating Officer  
Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy and Planning  
Donna Shumate, DVS Human Resource Consultant, Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center  
Sandra Ranicki, DVS Administrator, Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center  
Roz Trent, Department of Criminal Justice Services  
Roger Sullivan, Va. Veterans Coalition  
Tom Briggs, Va. Veterans Coalition

**Materials Distributed**

Draft Minutes of October 18, 2006 meeting; Talking Points – New Administrator Hired for Sitter-Barfoot Care Veterans Care Center; Summary of DVS Town Hall Meetings; DVS FY 07-08 Budget Amendment, as agreed to by the House/Senate Conference Committees; Long Term Care Feasibility Study Presentation; VVCC 2006 Customer Satisfaction Survey

**Call to Order and Welcome**

Commissioner Burgess called the meeting of the VCCAC to order at 12:20 p.m.. He welcomed the two newest members of the Committee, John Jackson and Jim Dudley. Both gentlemen gave brief background summaries.

**Roll Call and Quorum Determination**

Roz Trent called the roll. Four of the nine member committee were recorded as present. It was determined that a quorum was not present. Commissioner Burgess informed the committee that Bill Van Thiel was on his way, and since there was no quorum, the VCCAC could not take action on any committee business. The Commissioner continued with his remarks.

## **Commissioner's Comments**

### **DVS Personnel Updates**

- Commissioner Burgess informed the committee that Roz Trent had accepted employment with the Department of Criminal Justice Services effective March 26, 2007, and would no longer be working with the DVS and its boards. The Commissioner thanked Mrs. Trent for her services to the Department.
- Commissioner Burgess also informed the VCCAC that Lou Deal, Deputy Director of Communications had accepted employment with a defense contractor.
- The Commissioner formally introduced Donna Shumate, a retired state employee, who has been hired to perform the recruitment and staffing functions for the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center.
- The Commissioner introduced Sandra Ranicki, the new Administrator for the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center. Prior to her current post, Ms. Ranicki was Administrator for Imperial Health Care operated by HCR-Manocare and Executive Director for Elizabeth Adam Crump Manor operated by Beverly Healthcare. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Nursing from the University of Texas.

### **Summary of DVS Town Hall Meetings**

Commissioner Burgess distributed a handout of the Summary of the DVS Town Hall Meetings. DVS held five town hall meetings in early March to get input from veterans and their families. Meetings were held in Fredericksburg, Suffolk, Abingdon, Roanoke and Richmond, and were facilitated by Greg Brittingham, VCU Office of Public Policy. Veterans commented on DVS, the need for better communications about benefits, veteran health care, the need for improved benefits at the state level, and the need for support for spouses and family members. Veterans expressed the need to have one single voice to speak for veterans and address issues with the VA, Congress, and other policy makers.

Comments and results of the Town Hall meetings will be posted to the DVS website by the end of next week.

### **DVS Legislative Update**

- The Virginia War Memorial Educational Wing - The Virginia War Memorial received a Treasury Loan in the amount of \$3.5 million for construction of the Educational Wing. Last year, the War Memorial was appropriated \$500,000 towards construction. A total of \$6 million is needed. The Virginia War Memorial Education Foundation must raise the additional \$2 million from private donations.
- Veterans Preference – Legislation was passed that will clarify veterans preference, deleting the word “consider” and replacing it with the word “preference.” Mrs. Sara Wilson, Director of the Department of Human Resource Management gave a presentation on Veterans Preference to the Joint Leadership Council of Veterans Service Organizations at its March 14<sup>th</sup> meeting.

- SB 1145 - Prohibits discrimination by public bodies in the solicitation and awarding of contracts and requires public bodies to establish a program to facilitate the participation of businesses owned by special disabled veterans in procurement transactions. The bill also requires the Department of Veterans Services to establish a program to certify businesses owned by special disabled veterans upon requests of owners of such businesses. The bill defines "service disabled veteran" and "service disabled veteran business."

\*\*Mr. Van Thiel arrived at 12:30 p.m. after the roll was called. A quorum was determined at that time.

### **DVS Budget Information**

Steven Combs, DVS Director of Policy and Planning, gave a brief overview of FY 07-08 Budget Amendments, as agreed to by the House/Senate Conference Committees. The full document was distributed to committee members.

#### **DVS Services:**

- Care Centers – An increase of \$100,000 (Non-General Funds) was appropriated in FY 08 to address the modernization of patient medical records technology at DVS' care centers.
- Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center – This FY year, staffing of 50; next FY, staffing of 183 additional positions, making a total of 223 positions by the end of next FY.
- Benefits Services - No change.
- Cemetery Services – Additional funding to align the salaries budgeted for cemetery directors and grounds workers with market conditions and skill levels. The current position classifications for these individuals do not reflect their direct involvement with interments of veterans. For 2008, \$50,360 (General Funds); \$28,400 (Non-General Funds).
- State Approving Agency for Veterans Education and Training – No change

#### **Administrative and Support Services:**

- For FY 2008, provides \$555,000 and four (4) new positions to bolster the agency's administrative infrastructure. Three (3) of the additional positions will permit the agency to keep pace with the growth of its operations and provide the needed oversight and guidance to comply with existing standards and regulations, as well as meet the information technology, financial management, contracting and procurement, and human resource needs of an expanding agency. Funding is also provided for an outreach position to increase awareness among Virginia's veterans of the state and federal benefits available to them.

#### **Capital Budget:**

- Amendment provides an additional \$583,000 to address the costs associated with acquisitions of land of the Southwest Virginia Veterans Cemetery. Federal legislation authorizing the conveyance of the property requires the Commonwealth to cover the costs associated with the conveyance, including survey costs, environmental documentation, and other administrative costs.

#### Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Fund

- \$1,000,000 in FY08 from the general fund to provide up to a \$1,500 annual stipend to offset the costs of room, board, books and supplies for qualified survivors and dependents of military service members.

### **Review and Approval of VCCAC October 18, 2006 Minutes**

A **motion** was made by John Jackson, seconded by Bill Van Thiel, and passed unanimously to approve the minutes of October 18, 2006 VCCAC meeting.

### **Old Business**

Bill Van Thiel reported as follows:

#### Virginia Veterans Care Center

- Customer Care Surveys had been sent out to current and former residents of the VVCC regarding the services provided. 240 surveys were mailed; 122 surveys were returned. A copy of the survey was distributed. The two areas where low ratings were received fell in the laundry and food categories. Mr. VanThiel stated that there are two common categories where low ratings are received in nursing care facilities.
- On going renovations are taking place. The Storage and Laundry rooms are completed and operational. An updated listing of completed work will be reported at the next VCCAC meeting.

#### Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center

- Due to construction delays, the opening date has been changed to a late August/early September timeframe, rather than the originally anticipated July 1 opening date.
- Still in early stages; no admissions waiting list has been developed
- John Jackson stated that he had received questions from patient representatives, social workers and service officers regarding guidelines used for persons to be admitted to the Care Center. Bill Van Thiel responded that plans are underway to have meetings with the local hospital discharge planners, etc. to have a luncheon, give a tour of the facility, etc. He stated marketing brochures were not yet available. He added that most discharge planners are already knowledgeable of how to be admitted to a long term care facility.
- Vince Burgess stated that DVS is working with Delegate Dwight Jones to set up meetings with persons living in the community around the McGuire VA Medical Center to discuss job opportunities at the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center. The Center is located in Delegate Jones' district.

### Long Term Care Facilities Feasibility Study

Commissioner Burgess informed the Committee that DVS had received an unsolicited proposal to conduct a Long Term Care Feasibility study from the College of William & Mary. He stated that DVS has partnered with the College of William & Mary and with the First Chesapeake Group to conduct the statewide study on the need for new long term care beds in the Commonwealth.

Dr. Lou Rossiter, formerly VCCAC member and Director of the Schroeder Center for Healthcare Policy, College of William & Mary, and Dr. Christine Jenson, Research Associate, Thomas Jefferson Program in Public Policy, College of William & Mary gave a presentation on the Long Term Care Center Feasibility study. A draft report for public review and comment is proposed to be released in June 2007. It was discussed that DVS will help to host public meetings around the state for presentation of the draft, receive feedback and to identify options. Bristol, Norfolk, Southside Virginia, Fairfax and Harrisonburg were discussed as possible meeting locations.

Dr. Rossiter stated that Virginia has a federal cap of 1,312 beds (i.e. Virginia may apply for matching federal construction funds for up to 1,312 beds). 400 beds are currently in service or in the pipeline, and an additional 200-240 will be available with the building of the Hampton Veterans Care Center. In addition, the Sitter-Barfoot Veterans Care Center in Richmond will house a domiciliary wing with 40-80 beds. Dr. Rossiter asked whether the exceeding number of beds would impact the federal matching construction funds.

Commissioner Burgess charged Dr. Rossiter and the First Chesapeake Group to look into all possible ways to provide care, including partnering with private facilities, to meet the unmet needs of veterans in the Commonwealth. The emphasis of the study is to meet the needs, rather than focusing on the number of beds. He stated that the Department has the responsibility to veterans to provide the best possible care, and the study should not be limited to the amount of the federal cap of 1,312 beds.

Steven Combs was requested to do research to determine how the 1,312 federal caps had been forecasted.

Copies of the presentation were distributed to members. Dr. Rossiter will forward a copy of the presentation to the remainder of the committee who were absent in attending the meeting.

Commissioner Burgess thanked Dr. Rossiter for his presentation.

### **Public Comment Period**

Roger Sullivan, Va. Veterans Coalition expressed his concerns regarding the need and/or purpose for the feasibility study to be conducted. He stated that it is obvious that there is a need, and there were better ways to meet the needs other than using federal funds. He suggested that other ways that could be explored that may add beds at a faster rate than the time it would take to complete the study.

Dr. Rossiter stated that health care planning is a slow process if planning is done properly. He stated that a feasibility study is a good place to process, gather information, put all information in one place and provide to the entire state.

### **Schedule Next Meeting Date and Location**

Commissioner Burgess stated that Mondays and/or Fridays were the best days to have VCCAC meetings. The committee will meet in the month of July. Members will be notified of the exact date/time/location.

### **Adjourn**

There being no further business, the VCCAC meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.